

New Forest Mercury Vapour Light Records for 1975

By L. W. SIGGS*

Details of the catch in the Robinson Trap at Minstead in 1975 are as follows:—

	<i>Nights</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Specimens</i> <i>Average</i>	<i>Species</i> <i>Average</i>
March	31	305	10	3
April	28	939	33	6
May	28	283	10	5
June	29	1,365	46	19
July	31	3,925	127	40
August	31	5,736	185	31
September	29	972	34	10
October	30	695	23	6
November	16	254	16	5

These figures show that the trend in recent years of average catch per month continues to fall, and the figures for March, April, May, July, September and October are the lowest so far. Much has been written of the "glorious summer" of 1975 and it is true that in August there was a welcome spell of warm days in the New Forest. Nights, however, were not unduly warm in that month and throughout the year they were disappointing.

As a result, the annual catch of most species was down, some alarmingly so, as the following figures for the common Orthosiids, comparing 1975 with their peak year 1965, illustrate:—

	1975	1965
<i>Orthosia cruda</i> D. & S.	29	1,924
<i>Orthosia stabilis</i> D. & S.	654	2,322
<i>Orthosia incerta</i> Hufn.	234	1,467
<i>Orthosia munda</i> D. & S.	12	192
<i>Orthosia gothica</i> L.	282	1,406

Most species were well below average and only two made a record for the best year yet, viz. *Agrotis puta* Hübn. 814 (previous record 236) and *Mythimna pallens* L. 473 (384). In both cases the second brood was exceptionally high.

The total number of species recorded was 308.

There were two additions to the Minstead list:—

Heliothis peltigera D. & S.

Scopula immutata L. (the first record for the New Forest since the 1940s).

The following species, which are occasional here, were welcomed:—

Euxoa nigricans L., *Anaplecta prasina* D. & S., *Archanara sparganii* Esp., *Apamea ophiogramma* Esp., *Acronicta mega-*

* Sungate, Football Green, Minstead, Lyndhurst, Hampshire.

cephala D. & S., *Xylena vetusta* Hübn., *Conistra ligula* Esp., *Nycteola revayana* Scop., *Scopula floslactata* Haw., *Mesoleuca albicillata* L., *Horisme tersata* D. & S. (the second record for Minstead), *Lomographa bimaculata* Fab.

Migrants

Rather better numbers than for the past few years. Two new records for Minstead, *Heliothis peltigera* D. & S., and *Margaritia sticticalis* L. (which is also new for the New Forest).

Autographa gamma L. (551), *Agrotis ipsilon* Hufn. (19), *Lithosia quadra* L. (six, of which four were female), *Heliothis peltigera* D. & S. (one), *Orthonama obstipata* Fab. (one), *Nomophila noctuella* D. & S. (177), *Margaritia sticticalis* L. (one), *Plutella xylostella* L. (*maculipennis* Curt.) (37).

Polymorphism

Biston betularia L.

typical 24 (92%)
carbonaria one (4%)
insularia one (4%)

Idaea aversata L.

remutata 53 (70%)
aversata 24 (30%)

Alcis repandata L. typical 74, f. *consonaria* Hübn. three. *Xanthia icteritia* Hufn. typical 16, ab. *flavescens* Esp. two. *Eilema griseola* Hübn. typical 21, ab. *flava* Haw. three. *Eilema deplana* Esp. Variation in this species is considerable, but at the moment I have insufficient information to name them. I think I had 10 typical females (although all but two were of a pale form) and one typical male. There were two female varieties; six of one and one of the other. The latter had orange forewings and typical ochreous grey hindwings. The British Museum has no similar specimen. There were two male varieties: three of one and one of the other. (I have had yet another male variety in earlier years.) I am trying to find out more about this variation and should be glad to hear from anyone who has information on the subject.

AGRIOPIS MARGINARIA FAB. F. FUSCATA MOSLEY AT WOKING.
— I was most interested to find that the only example of the Dotted Border in my m.v. trap here on 25th March, 1976 was the melanic f. *fuscata* Mosley with its deep-brown forewings and dusky hindwings. I had only met with this form previously in Lancashire, since it is comparatively numerous in those northern areas of England and especially in Delamere Forest, Cheshire. Its presence in the southern counties is, however, apparently becoming more frequent, since South's *Moths of the British Isles* (1962 edition) mentions its occurrence both in Essex and Surrey so that it would be of interest to know of other records for this county or even in the London area. Mr. Denzil ffennell tells me he took several examples of this form in the vicinity of Eton College in the 1930s. — C. G. M. DE WORMS, Three Oaks, Woking, Surrey.